The Cleveland Museum of Art

Press Release

For Immediate Release
July 27, 1998

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Art Comes to Life With "Sight & Sound" Audio Tour at the Cleveland Museum of Art

CLEVELAND — The sound of horses' hooves thunder around a piazza in Florence, Italy, while bugle horns echo throughout the city. Boisterous crowds of excited spectators line the cobblestone streets and cheer as the horses race toward the finish line.

You might feel like you're at the *Palio*, a traditional Italian horse race celebrating the feast of St. John the Baptist during the Italian Renaissance. But in reality you're inside the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), looking at Giovanni Toscani's 14th-century painting, *Palio in Florence*, while listening to a recorded description on the CMA's new self-guided **Sight & Sound** CD audio tour.

"The **Sight & Sound** audio tour is an enjoyable way to learn more about our museum's acclaimed permanent collection," said CMA director Robert P. Bergman. "Now anyone, first-time visitor or long-time member, novice or art expert, can have a more enjoyable informed visit with **Sight & Sound**. What's more — it's fun! We are grateful to the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund for supporting this important project as part of our *Convening the Community* program. And I also want to acknowledge the efforts of Mary Woodward and Nancy McAfee on our staff for coordinating this very elaborate and ambitious project."

Available starting Aug. 1, **Sight & Sound** utilizes a light-weight portable CD player with headphones. The units will be rented to visitors ages 8 and up at the Membership and Ticket Center in the museum's main lobby. The rental cost is $4 for adults, $3 for students and seniors, and free for CMA members. Groups of 15 or more receive a discount and must make advance arrangements with Group Coordinator Maggie Day at (216) 421-7340, ext. 380.

Produced by Antenna Audio, a California-based company, from a script written by CMA curators and educators, the **Sight & Sound** tour contains over 300 messages about specific works of art, the artists who created them, and overall descriptions of galleries and periods of art. About one-third of the messages contain music and sound effects appropriate to

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the time and setting. One-third use only a musical background and one-third are purely voice messages.

Art objects with a **Sight & Sound** message are designated by a special headset symbol with a number inside it. By pressing that number into the CD player, the message will play. There is also a LCD screen on top of the unit for those who might want to read the text of the message.

"Visitors have often commented on how wonderful it would be to be able to stroll through the galleries with a curator at their side. **Sight & Sound** was produced with that in mind," said Dr. Bergman.

The messages last a minute to a minute-and-a-half and are delivered by a variety of narrators. While most descriptions are read by professional actors, some are unscripted observations by the museum's curators or personal reactions of local celebrities like **Mike Hargrove**, **John Lanigan** and **Jimmy Malone**, **Dee Perry**, **Larry Morrow**, and **Jim Mantel;** and community leaders, including **The Rev. Otis Moss**, **Alex Sanchez** and **Judge Jose A. Villanueva**.

Nearly 30 messages have been created especially for young visitors. (The labels for these art objects are marked with the universal symbol for family.) There is also a special **Highlights Tour** of some 30 works, narrated by Dr. Bergman.

For more information, contact the museum's Membership and Ticket Center at (216) 421-7340.

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